

L'Abri en Ville (Montréal) and Ancoura (Ottawa)

For which target population was/is your housing initiative developed?

- *For adults living with a serious mental illness who are stable.*

How large is this project?

- *The L'Abri model has been replicated in 3 communities: St. Lambert, Chateauguay, Ottawa.*

How many housing units?

- *Rental apartments and townhouses are located city-wide in both Montréal and Ottawa. There are no housing developments or ownerships involved in our centres.*
- *L'Abri en Ville in Montréal has 10 apartments with 3 residents per apartment.*
- *Ancoura in Ottawa has 2 townhouses with 3 residents in each.*
- *Our Harbour has 5 apartments and Les toits d'Émile currently has 3 apartments, all with 3 residents each.*

How and when did this initiative get started?

- *In 1989, members of ICSSPC (Interchurch Social Service Planning Committee) heard from Shelagh Coinner who had created CARE (Create a Rehabilitative Environment) on the West Island. Members of ICSSPC worked to create the model in Montréal. L'Abri en Ville opened its first apartment in 1991.*

Who are your partners in this development?

- *Faith communities are our main partners, including the Unitarian Church of Montréal and First Unitarian Congregation in Ottawa.*

Is there a lead organization?

- *L'Abri en Ville is the lead organization.*

How did you acquire the land for the development?

- *There is no land acquisition involved. Our residents live in rental units, in apartments and townhouses, in various parts of the city.*

What are your sources of funding?

- *Donations from our members, friends and family; grants from foundations and other large organizations; fundraising projects. Most of the fundraising goes towards the salaries of our coordinators. A dedicated cadre of volunteers provides the supportive community that is the heart of L'Abri en Ville and Ancoura.*
- *The rent is designed to be affordable for the residents within the limits of their disability support income.*

What was your experience with NIMBYISM?

- *This hasn't been an issue. The apartments are not all in one building. The 10 apartments in Montréal are in various areas of the city.*

What are your ongoing operating successes and challenges?

- **Successes:** *L'Abri and Ancoura, and the other two centres, offer stable, long-term affordable housing to 60 residents who live with a mental illness. Providing supportive community through a team of volunteers for each residence (unit) is distinctive to the L'Abri model. Supportive community ensures the residents do not become isolated.*
- **Challenges** *include: maintaining adequate funding; and ensuring that in creating supportive community, our residents have the best quality of life possible.*

Is this your first housing project and would you do it again?

- *With regards to Ancoura, they have opened two rented townhomes, in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Ancoura plans to open its third residence this fall. The experience of Ancoura and L'Abri en Ville has shown that it takes about a year of careful preparations to launch a new residence. Preparations include fundraising, the selection of residents, training volunteers, and finding an appropriate townhome or apartment.*
- *The housing model of L'Abri en Ville and Ancoura is centered in long-term supportive community, linking residents with volunteers and activities in the community, and giving everyone involved an opportunity to enrich their lives.*

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